

ARIZONA HERALD
24 Apr. 1967 **UFO's and the CIA**

A charge by a University of Arizona physicist that the Central Intelligence Agency in 1953 requested the Air Force to adopt a policy of systematic "debunking of flying saucers" raises again the question of the role of the CIA in domestic policy-making. The charge is made by Dr. James E. McDonald, professor of meteorology and senior physicist at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, in a paper delivered to the American Meteorological Society in Washington, D.C. Dr. McDonald, who believes that "the least unsatisfactory hypothesis" about the origin of UFO's is that they are extra-terrestrial probes, said his information on the CIA role comes from closed-door testimony from CIA officials before the Robertson Panel probing UFO reports.

STAT He said the CIA believed that a flood of UFO reports to U.S. Air Bases in 1952 constituted a national security problem because they were "clogging" military intelligence channels and demanding too much of investigators' time. The CIA request that UFO's be debunked was followed, Dr. McDonald said, by promulgation of Air Force Regulation 200-2 which sharply reduced the number of UFO reports by forbidding release by air bases of any information on UFO sightings. All sightings were to be funneled through Project Bluebook where, according to Dr. McDonald, "they have been largely categorized as conventional objects with little attention to scientific considerations."

The strictures on UFO information were further tightened by a regulation which made any release of information on UFO sightings by any of the military services or, in some cases, commercial airlines, a crime punishable with fines up to \$10,000 and imprisonment up to 10 years. "These regulations," Dr. McDonald said, "have not only cut off almost all useful reports from military pilots, tower operators, and ground crews, but even more serious from a scientific viewpoint has been their drastic effect on the availability of military radar data on UFO's." Prior to 1953, significant radar sightings were disclosed, but now they are explained away as natural phenomena, he said.

To the credit of the Air Force, it has requested the University of Colorado to conduct an independent investigation of reports of UFO's. But if the CIA requested that UFO reports be squelched—and the charge has not been denied—it is a serious matter.

The CIA is by law an intelligence-gathering agency restricted from interfering with the internal affairs of the country. In its activities with student organizations and labor unions, however, and with its attempt to censor UFO reports, it has disregarded these restrictions. It thereby threatens the very freedom from government control which it is supposed to protect, a danger which Congress must realize if it is to properly regulate the CIA's activities.